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1918

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[No. 1.]

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Missionary Helpers' Union.

EXPLANATORY PAPER.

"Thy kingdom come."—*Matthew vi. 10.*

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."
Mark xvi. 15.

THE Missionary Helpers' Union was started in April, 1883, in order to help Friends' Foreign Missions. Most of us cannot go out as Missionaries to the heathen, but all of us can do something for them. This Union, therefore, is intended to supply as simply as possible the necessary link between the needs of the workers abroad and the helpers at home. From the beginning the membership has not been confined to children, as no one is too old to belong if they can do anything to help, and all ages and classes are welcome as members.

We need to be banded together, to stir ourselves and one another up to a living, prayerful interest in Foreign Missions, and in a very real sense to uphold the hands and share the burdens of our friends abroad. For this we must make ourselves acquainted with their needs and circumstances, we must try to understand something of the problems before them, and feel that we have a part in their work.

We have no hard-and-fast rules, because some people can do one thing, and others can only help in quite a different way; but the following are the objects of the Union:—

1.—To help by prayer. It is hoped that members will pray for Missionaries and the heathen some time every Sunday. This is a real way of helping, perhaps the *most* real way. And to remember the needs of our Missionaries daily is much better for ourselves and them than only doing so as suggested once in the week. Some of us may feel that we need something to help us to

definiteness in prayer, and for these there is the Missionary Helpers' Prayer Union, which also from time to time brings before us the needs of our Missionaries and some of the special objects for which they ask our prayers. Papers containing these requests culled from their letters, &c., are sent once a quarter to each member of the Prayer Union, who need not necessarily be members of the M.H.U. But for real prayerful interest we need not only to know about Missions, but to have a living union with the Lord Himself, and such love to Him and to our fellow-men everywhere, that we really do care about them and long for their eternal welfare.

II.—To help by interesting ourselves and others in the cause of Foreign Missions. People are not interested in a thing they know nothing about. Our part must be to see that they *do* know something, and we can suggest interesting books to them, or talk about what we are ourselves reading or have seen of Missionary work. Books can always be had through the Local Secretary of a Branch, who has a library of over 520 books to fall back upon merely by applying to the Secretary of the M.H.U. ; and the more we read of the heathen world the more we shall long to help. Then we can read *Our Missions*, published monthly by the F.F.M.A. at 1s. 6d. per year, post free. We can encourage others to take it in, and to those who cannot afford to pay for it themselves we can lend our own ; by-and-by, as they become interested we shall find that they will afford to subscribe to it themselves. Missionary Bible-readings are also very helpful when we can, to quote the words of the membership card of the Gleaners' Union, "glean out of the fields of Holy Scripture the messages of God regarding His purposes of mercy to mankind, His commands to His people to make Christ known everywhere, and His promises of blessing to all who work for Him."

III.—To help by getting others to join the Union, and where possible to get new Branches started. In this a very useful place could be well filled by our men members, who are generally very glad to help when they are appealed to. Much good might be done if they would be willing to give Missionary addresses or lantern lectures (for which many good slides may be borrowed from the

F.F.M.A. office) to Junior Branches of the M.H.U. ; or write papers for Adult Branches, which might also occasionally form subject for discussion at evening meetings. Were such addresses more often given in connection with Bands of Hope, First-day Schools, Mothers' Meetings, &c., it might lead to the enrolment of many more members, if not to the starting of new Branches.

IV.—To help by doing handiwork, suitable either for sale or to send to the Missions, such as needlework, painting, drawing, making scrap-books, &c.

It is important to clearly understand that this is not a rule that all members *must* follow, but a suggestion for those who have time and opportunity for such very useful work. Therefore membership in the Union does not involve attending a working party or doing handiwork, for in some Branches this is not practicable. In some places Local Secretaries are able to arrange for members to meet together and make things ; but where this is not possible work can frequently be done at home. A list of things useful to our Foreign Missions can always be had from the Secretary, and from this list members can choose work for some Mission Station or Missionary as they feel most inclined. It is a great help to have some special object in view, and a pleasant variety is made by working for some different Mission each year. For members who feel that they would rather send money than work to the foreign field, sales of plain and fancy needlework are often very successful ; useful things at reasonable prices will nearly always sell well at home.

V.—To help in any way we can. We can give willingly, frequently, systematically, of our prayers, our time, and our money. Let us consider the last item, having already touched upon the other two. "*Proportional* giving is a better name than *systematic* giving," says J. Forbes Moncrieff, "for many give systematically, but systematically a great deal less than they ought to give, and by no means in proportion as the Lord has prospered them. We must honour the Lord with the first-fruits of our substance. We should give willingly and cheerfully ; giving should be a true pleasure. Our giving should be prompted by *love* to God and man. The constraining power should ever be the love of Jesus Christ our Saviour. The motive power of all

good work and good giving is *love*. How we give is the real test of our faith and love. "The highest and purest form of love is that which gives."

We should give frequently ; for most people it is easier to give small sums frequently than large sums at distant intervals. And for this, collecting boxes, cards, &c., are useful, and it is a good plan to arrange to give for some special purpose, say the support of an orphan or native teacher, or one of the many other necessary wants that can always be found to need supplying, if we will only take the trouble to find out what is really needed.

It has been felt recently very strongly that M.H.U. members (notably men and youths who cannot sew) might considerably assist F.F.M.A. correspondents in the collection of the small half-yearly or quarterly subscriptions, which would so materially assist the funds were more systematic organization applied to it.

It should be clearly understood that all the money subscribed or given through the Missionary Helpers' Union goes to Friends' Foreign Missions without anything being used for the printing or other expenses of the Union, which are paid for by a separate fund. Some Branches are interested in all the Missions, and their money is divided among all. Other Branches are especially interested in India, Madagascar, or some other country, and their money goes to whichever Mission they most wish to help.

In conclusion, let us each ask of ourselves, "What am I doing towards the spread of the Kingdom of my Saviour either at home or in the foreign field?" It may be that we shall have to confess with shame before the Lord how little we have done, how little we have cared, how little we have given, and how little we have loved. May we each one ask in all humility, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and then as He shows us, may we promptly obey and do it with our might, realising that it is not our work but His.